

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (original) A method of reducing evaporation from one or more wells of at least a first multiwell plate, the method comprising providing at least the first multiwell plate with a plurality of wells and opposing side walls which extend around the plate and which define a ridge spaced inwardly of the side walls and extending around the plate between the side walls and the plurality of wells, and at least partially filling the ridge with a liquid.
2. (original) The method of claim 1 further including placing the first multiwell plate into a stacked configuration with at least one second multiwell plate.
3. (original) The method of claim 2 wherein said at least one second multiwell plate includes a downwardly extending flange which extends around a lower surface of the second multiwell plate and which is configured to be removably received by the ridge of the at least first multiwell plate when said first and second multiwell plates are placed in said stacked configuration.
4. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said liquid comprises water.
5. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said liquid comprises a buffer.
6. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said ridge has a lower surface which includes a plurality of spaced-apart ridges extending upwardly therefrom.
7. (original) The method of claim 6 wherein said plurality of ridges have a height which is less than a height of said opposing side walls of said at least first multiwell plate.

8. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said ridge includes a layer of one or more wicking materials covering at least a portion of said ridge.

9. (original) The method of claim 8 wherein said one or more wicking materials comprises a felt material.

10. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the ridge includes a layer of an absorbent material covering at least a portion of the ridge.

11. (original) A method of reducing evaporation from one or more wells of at least a first multiwell plate which is configured to be placed into a stacked configuration with at least one second multiwell plate, the method comprising:

providing at least the first multiwell plate with a plurality of wells and opposing side walls which extend around the plate and which define a ridge spaced inwardly of the side walls and extending around the plate between the side walls and the plurality of wells;

providing at least the second multiwell plate with a downwardly extending flange which extends around a lower surface of the plate and which is configured to be removably received by the ridge of the at least first multiwell plate;

at least partially filling the ridge with a liquid; and

removably positioning said at least second multiwell plate on said at least first multiwell plate such that the flange extends at least partially into said ridge and contacts said liquid to thereby create a substantial evaporation barrier to prevent air entrance to the wells to minimize evaporation of sample liquids in the wells when said at least second multiwell plate is positioned on the at least first multiwell plate.

12. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein the at least partially filling the ridge with a liquid comprises at least partially filling the ridge with water.

13. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein the at least partially filling the ridge with a liquid comprises at least partially filling the ridge with a buffer solution.

14. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein said at least partially filling the ridge with a liquid is performed before said at least second multiwell plate is removably positioned on said at least first multiwell plate.

15. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein said at least partially filling the ridge with a liquid is performed after said at least second multiwell plate is removably positioned on said at least first multiwell plate.

16. (original) The method of claim 11 further including providing a lower surface of said ridge of said at least first multiwell plate with a plurality of spaced-apart ribs which extend upwardly from the ridge.

17. (original) The method of claim 16 wherein said upwardly extending ribs have a height which is less than a height of said opposing side walls of said at least first multiwell plate.

18. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein said ridge includes a layer of at least one wicking material covering at least a portion of said ridge.

19. (original) The method of claim 18 wherein said at least one wicking material comprises a felt material.

20. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein said ridge comprises a layer of absorbent material covering at least a portion of the ridge.

21. (original) A multiwell plate comprising:  
a plurality of wells having openings therein for receiving a sample material; and  
opposing side walls which extend around the plate and which define a ridge spaced inwardly of the side walls and extending around the plate between the side walls and the plurality of wells, said ridge comprising one or more ribs which extend upwardly from a lower surface of said ridge.

22. (original) The multiwell plate of claim 21 wherein said ribs have a height which is less than a height of said opposing side walls.

23. (original) The multiwell plate of claim 21 further comprises a layer of a wicking material covering at least a portion of said ridge.

24. (currently amended) The multiwell plate of claim 24-23 wherein said wicking material comprises a felt material.

25. (original) The multiwell plate of claim 21 further comprising a layer of absorbent material which covers at least a portion of the ridge.

26. (original) The multiwell plate of claim 21 further comprising one or more finger projections which extend upwardly from a lower surface of the ridge.

27. (original) A first multiwell plate which is configured to be placed in a stacked configuration with at least one second multiwell plate, the first multiwell plate comprising:

a plurality of wells for receiving sample material therein;  
opposing side walls which extend around the plate and which define a ridge spaced inwardly of the side walls and extending around the plate between the side walls and the plurality of wells; and

a downwardly extending flange which extends around a lower surface of the plate and which is configured to be removably received by a corresponding ridge of the second multiwell plate when said first multiwell plate is removably positioned on said at least second multiwell plate in a stacked configuration.